

Lesotho | Drought induced food insecurity



Banana Pit in Mafeteng, Lesotho during a monitoring visit

Appeal №: MDRLS008 Emergency appeal launched: 06/09/2024	Glide №: DR-2024-000071-LSO
Final report issued on: 28/02/2026	Timeframe covered by final report: From 06/09/2024 to 28/02/2026
Number of people targeted: 699,049 people	Number of people assisted: 87,381
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 5 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 7 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 750,000

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

Overview of the 2022/2023–2024/2025 Rainy Season Conditions and Impacts

The 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 rainy seasons in Lesotho were marked by excessive rainfall that disrupted farming, damaged crops, and reduced agricultural productivity, resulting in poor harvests, lower food production, and increased food insecurity nationwide. Beyond damaging crops, the heavy rains also destroyed stored food supplies and damaged critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and irrigation systems, particularly in the rural districts of Maseru and Quthing. These impacts disrupted livelihoods, limited access to essential services, and further deepened food insecurity among vulnerable communities. While communities were still recovering from the previous years (2021 to 2023) heavy rainfall events, the country was hit by El Niño-induced drought in 2023/2024 and this period was characterized by late onset of rains and recurrent heatwaves from October 2023 to early 2024/2025, further worsening the already fragile livelihoods and living conditions.

For the past three years, the country has continued to experience persistent and compounding climatic shocks, including periods of excessive rainfall (2022–2024) followed by severe drought (2024/2025) conditions, which disrupted agriculture, weakened livelihoods, and worsened rural livelihoods, increasing food insecurity and slowing recovery efforts. In July 2024, over 22% of the Lesotho population (approximately 335,000 people) were estimated to be food insecure (LVAC Report 2024) and required urgent humanitarian assistance. Alongside drought related food insecurity, increase in staple food prices and declining livestock production have reduced household purchasing power and weakened livelihoods, further increasing vulnerability and worsening food insecurity. Livestock farmers in the southern side of the country were also affected by livestock disease outbreak “Blue Tongue,” which resulted in losses of around 200 sheep and goats. The situation further undermined household incomes that depend on wool and mohair production. As a result, many vulnerable households resorted to negative coping strategies, including selling productive assets to either meet their basic needs or restore their damaged houses. The worsening conditions in Lesotho led to a crisis that prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in July 2024, to address widespread food insecurity, livelihood disruptions, and to mobilize urgent humanitarian response.

Summary 2025 Winter Seasonal Review and impacts

In addition to socio-economic pressures and rainy season challenges, during the 2024 and 2025 winters season, the country experienced severe cold waves and heavy snowfall which resulted in the deaths of four people in Mokhotlong and further livestock losses exceeding 120 animals. These repeated shocks deepened food insecurity and threatened the already fragile livelihoods. This was also marked by the unusual occurrence of cold waves and snowfall experienced in October 2025 (Spring) which is not a usual time to experience snow placing additional strain on livelihoods, economic stability, and already vulnerable communities. The situation was further exacerbated by a deteriorating socio-economic factor, including widespread job losses linked to the global economic which led to rising unemployment levels, particularly among young people (youth), prompting the Government of Lesotho to declare a national state of emergency to rising youth unemployment and economic instability, driven by uncertainty over U.S. trade tariffs and potential loss of AGOA benefits. The state of emergency was effective from 30th June 2025 until 30th June 2027, the declaration enables emergency measures to mobilize resources, accelerate economic recovery, and implement targeted job creation and livelihood support programs, particularly for young people.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

The Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) is a key partner in the government's humanitarian response, supporting disaster management efforts through active participation in coordination meetings and by being a member of the National and district-based Drought Humanitarian Response Team. Both the LRCS Secretary General (SG) and Disaster Manager actively participate in Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT) meetings, collaborating with other NGOs, UN agencies, and key stakeholders at both strategic and technical levels. LRCS has a Disaster Management department and over two hundred volunteers in five districts, trained on WASH, CEA, PGI and emergency response, who also play a vital role in implementing emergency response operations with technical support from LRCS headquarters. At the district level, LRCS plays a vital and active role as a key member of the District Disaster Management Team (DDMT). In this capacity, LRCS is responsible for representing the organization in all DDMT meetings, ensuring that its humanitarian mandate and perspectives are incorporated into local disaster preparedness, response, and recovery planning. The LRCS contributes technical expertise, supports coordination efforts, and helps strengthen community resilience by working closely with other stakeholders within the district.

To respond to the government call for support, LRCS with support from the IFRC launched the Drought Emergency Appeal in August 2024. LRCS implemented a range of efforts to address the country's worsening drought crisis in coordination with government and humanitarian actors. Firstly in May 2024, LRCS, with support from the IFRC, provided funding to a tune of In May 2024, IFRC allocated CHF 711,203 to assist 12,500 people has provided multipurpose cash grants, livelihood support, and WASH and health initiatives to address food insecurity which was later increased to CHF 5 million after the launch of the Emergency Appeal. The key interventions conducted by LRCS included multipurpose cash transfers, support for food security and livelihoods through the distribution of summer and winter cropping seeds, household homestead vegetable seeds and fruit trees, capacity building of Disaster Risk Reduction structures (DRR) and Red Cross volunteers.

1. Multipurpose Cash Transfers

As part of the El Niño-induced Food Insecurity Emergency Appeal, the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) provided financial assistance to 2,500 vulnerable households over a three-month period, ending in December 2024. Each household received a total of three cash transfers, amounting to M1,500.00 per transfer, aimed at addressing urgent food security needs. Following updated guidance from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report and its projections, LRCS expanded the program to reach an additional eight hundred households across the most affected districts: Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek. These newly added households received monthly cash assistance of M1,500.00 for two consecutive months, in alignment with the initial support model. The distribution of funds was conducted using mobile financial service platforms, including Vodacom Mpesa, Econet Ecocash, and Chaperone C-pay, ensuring efficient delivery and ease of access for recipients in remote and underserved areas. To evaluate the effectiveness of the cash assistance and better understand its impact on household resilience and food security, LRCS conducted two Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys which aimed at gathering feedback on both cash transfers and non-food items such as training and distribution of seeds as well as fruit trees. The findings from the two surveys provided valuable insights that will guide and improve future humanitarian interventions.

2. Food Security and Livelihoods

i. Summer Cropping

To improve household food security and promote sustainable agriculture, the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) distributed vegetable seeds and shade nets to 2,500 households and provided field crop seeds such as maize and beans to five hundred households in December 2024. However, 30% of the beneficiaries that received field crop seeds reported that they were unable to plant due to delayed distribution. In addition, to build long-term resilience, LRCS trained 156 lead farmers as Training of Trainers on climate-smart agriculture and food preservation participants included LRCS volunteers (32), beneficiaries (115) and lead farmers (21) under the Ministry of Agriculture through its extension services. These farmers are expected to share their knowledge with their communities, helping to improve drought-adapted farming practices and enhance food security.

ii. Winter Cropping

To further enhance food security and promote year-round agricultural production, the LRCS supported 1,500 households with winter cropping seeds. Each household received seeds comprising of beans, peas, and wheat. This intervention aimed to bridge seasonal food shortages and improve dietary diversity by ensuring more stable and continuous food production throughout the year. In parallel, LRCS invested in strengthening community capacity by training 256 lead farmers, participants included volunteers (54), beneficiaries representatives (190) and government lead farmers under the ministry of Agriculture located in the agriculture centers where trainings were conducted (12) from the targeted areas. These farmers participated in comprehensive training sessions on climate-smart agriculture and food preservation techniques tailored to winter cropping conditions. The objective was to equip lead farmers with adaptive farming strategies that are resilient to climate variability, enabling them to implement and share best practices with their peers. This dual approach of providing inputs and enhancing skills contributes to the long-term sustainability and resilience of household farming systems across the region. In total 412 lead farmers Training of Trainers (ToT) trained to train 2,622 lead farmers in their respective communities and this included the targeted households under the emergency appeal.

3. Water and Sanitation

A total of 11,845 individuals were reached through targeted Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) campaigns, as well as Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) messaging. These awareness-raising efforts were integrated into key community activities, including climate-smart agriculture and food preservation training, as well as during the distribution of seeds and fruit trees. The combined approach ensured that critical messages on hygiene, gender equality, and protection were delivered alongside livelihood support, contributing to holistic community resilience. Furthermore, to improve access to clean and reliable water sources in drought-affected areas, LRCS rehabilitated four water sources in Maseru (Ha Ntlama) and Qacha's Nek (Tebellong, Sepechele and Ha Tlali). Amongst the four rehabilitated sources, only two water sources, one in Tebellong where the two water sources were reconstructed and one in Ha Ntlama water pump was serviced and properly maintained. In Sepechele and Ha Tlali, Water reservoirs (storage tanks) were constructed to ensure reliable storage and distribution of water, complemented by the installation of pipelines to facilitate efficient water transfer. Only four of the six planned water sources were constructed or rehabilitated due to funding constraints and higher-than-expected costs. As a result, interventions were prioritized in Maseru and Qacha's Nek, where projects aligned with existing rural water supply plans and the priorities of the Lesotho Red Cross Society, enabling more efficient implementation.

4. Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery

To strengthen community preparedness and enhance resilience to future shocks, LRCS, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, conducted a series of community training sessions focused on climate-smart agriculture. These trainings targeted a wide range of farming activities, including vegetable gardening, open-field summer cropping, and winter cultivation. The aim was to equip farmers with adaptive, sustainable agricultural practices that can withstand the increasing impacts of climate change, such as drought and unpredictable weather patterns. In partnership with the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and District Disaster Management Teams, LRCS also revived and trained 18 Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) and 13 Community-Based Disaster Response Teams (CBDRTs) in Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek. These teams received comprehensive training in disaster preparedness and response, with an added focus on first aid and emergency response skills.

5. National Society Capacity Building, Strengthening and Monitoring

To enhance LRCS's ability to effectively respond to the ongoing Emergency Appeal, IFRC deployed surge personnel, specifically a Finance and Operations Manager, for a four-month period. This strategic deployment aimed at building LRCS's capacity to manage the appeal operations. In addition, the newly recruited Senior Branch Officers (five in total), who also served as project officers, received onboard training on managing, executing, coordinating, and oversee the implementation of Emergency Appeal operational. This enhanced their ability to manage field activities, ensure quality delivery, and provide technical support to local teams. Furthermore, a total of 678 volunteers were trained across a range of key thematic areas, including Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate-smart agriculture, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). Following these trainings, the volunteers were deployed within their respective districts to support various project activities as needs arose, playing a critical role in community engagement, service, and emergency response. With the support of IFRC, LRCS continued to mobilize resources from both internal and external donors, having hosted visits from USAID and the UN Secretariat, and submitted concept notes to several donors, including USAID, ECHO and the Japanese Embassy and the African Development Bank. These efforts aim to secure additional support for addressing Lesotho's ongoing drought and food insecurity crisis.

Operational risk assessment

This operation has aligned itself with the IFRC Risk Management Framework where risks are identified, analyzed, monitored, and managed to mitigate their associated impacts.

The National Society (NS) and IFRC Surge teams conducted monthly meetings to review and monitor the identified risks and discuss mitigation measures. The National Society had the Finance Director serving as the Risk Management Focal Person, coordinating issues related to risk management. However, the implementation of risk mitigation measures remained the responsibility of the Secretary General, in liaison with the Head of the Cluster Delegation in Pretoria. The NS had already developed a risk management register in line with the IFRC Risk Management Framework, which was reviewed and updated regularly. The table below provided a summary of some of the risks identified and the corresponding mitigation measures.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
High Staff turnover	high	high	Frequent training of volunteers and newly recruited district managers.
Security Risk	Low	High	LRCS will use mobile FSPs for cash transfers.
Inadequate Targeting and duplication of effort	Medium	High	The intense verification exercise will be conducted collaborating closely with relevant stakeholders.
Inflation and Market	Low	Medium	Conduct market assessment to monitor the situation.
Fraud and Corruption:	Low	High	- LRCS will put measures in place to allow transparency in all its procurement process. - LRCS will continuously review the suppliers' register and conduct background checks to suppliers and service contractors.
Limited funding	High	High	- Review the available resource mobilization strategy and plans. - Hire a resource mobilization person to focus on fund raising. - Prioritize activity implementation

A. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Throughout the implementation period, the LRCS requested two non-cost extensions to ensure the effective completion of planned activities. The first extension covered a three-month period from August to 20 November 2025, while the second extension also spanned three months, from December 2025 to 18 February 2026. These extensions provided LRCS with additional time to fully implement the planned interventions, following delays experienced during the operation. A key contributing factor to these delays was the LRCS realignment process, which resulted in significant staff turnover. This organizational transition affected operational continuity and led to the postponement of several activities initially scheduled for April and May. Overall, the extensions were essential in enabling the organization to stabilize operations, restore implementation momentum, and ensure that the objectives of the project were achieved.

B. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT

With coordination support from DMA and technical guidance from IFRC, LRCS was able to successfully implement the Drought Emergency Appeal which focused on both immediate needs and long-term resilience. The operation integrated Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach, ensuring community involvement, ownership, and accountability. Key interventions included livelihood support through multi-purpose cash, climate-smart agriculture, WASH improvements, health interventions, and cross-cutting areas like Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), risk reduction, climate adaptation, and recovery. This comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach aimed to address the immediate impacts of the drought while building sustainable community resilience for the future.

STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION



Livelihoods

Female > 18: **2,107**

Female < 18: **9,646**

Male > 18: **1,515**

Male < 18: **6,211**

Objective: <i>Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods</i>			
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of beneficiaries identified to receive farm inputs	2,622	5000
	# of families/households who received seeds (maize, bean, peas, wheat)	2,622	5000
	# of households who received training in agricultural and homestead gardening	2,622	5000
	# of families/households who received homestead/vegetable seeds (carrots, beetroot, reddish, spinach)	2500	5000
	# of households/ families who received fruit trees (apple/peach)	2500	5000
	# of Post Distribution Monitoring Exercise conducted	2	3
	# of lead farmers trainings	25	40

Achievements

The initial target of the EA was 5,000, however due to insufficient funding only 51% of the target was reached. Through the EA, the LRCS initiative supported 2,500 households with cash transfers, seeds, and fruit trees. The beneficiaries were equally distributed across five districts; Mafeteng, Maseru, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, and Mohale's Hoek, with each district supporting 500 households. Beneficiary selection was undertaken using a community-based targeting approach, facilitated by the District Disaster Management Teams, the district-based team consisting of representatives from government ministries and non-governmental organizations operating at the district level. The process was coordinated under the guidance of the District Disaster Management Authority, the Department of Social Development, the LRCS Disaster Management Unit, and the Ministry of Local Government. Communities identified vulnerable households in need of assistance, and the resulting beneficiary lists were subsequently verified against the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) database, managed by the Department of Social Development. The initiative covered 19,479 people estimated under livelihood pillar, this includes both direct (2622 families) and indirect (16,857) beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were reached either through seeds distribution, fruit trees and trainings.

- A total of 2,500 households were provided with vegetable seed packages as once off to support homestead gardening and improve dietary diversity at household level. The seed packages included 100g of various variety (rape, spinach, beetroot, and carrots) enabling families to grow their own fresh produce and strengthen

food security and nutrition. Families were able to produce vegetable seeds in their homestead gardens to serve to complement the household meals. Furthermore, households also produced maize, peas and beans from their fields. Most households produced mainly for consumption with few that sold the vegetable surplus.

- In addition, the same 2,500 households received fruit tree seedlings, including apple and peach varieties. These trees are intended to provide longer term nutritional and livelihood benefits while also contributing to environmental sustainability through increased vegetation cover.
- To support seasonal agricultural production, 2,622 households received either summer or winter cropping seeds. Five hundred households were supplied with summer seed packages in November 2024 and each household received maize (5kg) and beans (5kg), allowing beneficiaries to engage in cultivation during the summer planting season. Furthermore, 2,800 households received winter seed packages consisting of 4 kg each of wheat, peas, and beans to enhance winter cropping activities and improve year-round food availability from March 2025 to February 2026. Unlike the summer seeds where each household received all the varieties, for winter cropping households had to choose on variety hence more people were reached.
- Beneficiary selection for both summer and winter seed distributions was conducted in close collaboration with lead farmers and with technical guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture. This participatory process helped ensure transparency and that support reached both vulnerable and appropriate farming. The majority of households prioritized production for household consumption, ensuring a reliable supply of nutritious food throughout the growing season. While most of the harvest was retained for family use, a small number of households generated additional income by selling surplus vegetables, demonstrating the potential for both homestead and field production to contribute not only to improved nutrition but also to household livelihoods.

In addition, **412 lead farmers** (organized into twenty-five groups) were trained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in climate-smart agriculture and food preservation techniques. These training courses, facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, aim to promote sustainable and resilient farming practices. The lead trained farmers further disseminated knowledge within their communities, strengthening local capacity to adapt to climate change and maintain agricultural productivity under increasingly challenging environmental conditions. A total of 2,622 households were reached through the support of lead farmers. The lead farmers were selected to ensure representation across all villages. This enabled them to provide guidance and to monitor crop production within their respective communities without incurring additional travel costs.



Picture: Demonstration of conservation Agriculture in Mafeteng, Beneficiary vegetable garden-Maseru, Field Visit -Quthing

Challenges and lessons learnt.

- Delays in the procurement of summer cropping seeds resulted in late distribution to beneficiary farmers. This resulted in them not being able to plant during the intended summer season, particularly those in the mountainous districts of Qacha's Nek and Quthing. By the time the seeds were received, the planting window had already passed, forcing some farmers to store the seeds for use in the following planting season. This experience highlights the importance of timely procurement and distribution to ensure that agricultural inputs are delivered in line with seasonal calendars.

	Multi-purpose Cash	Female > 18: 6,533	Female < 18: 4,411
		Male > 18: 2,124	Male < 18: 3,267
Objective:	<i>To improve household food security and provision of immediate relief to affected families</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of households of beneficiaries to receive cash assistance</i>	3,267	5,000
	<i># of households who received cash</i>	3,267	5,000
	<i># of post distribution monitoring (PDM) conducted and reported</i>	2	3
	<i># of monitoring visits and engagement of communities that are documented on the use of cash</i>	3	3

Achievements

As part of the EA, LRCS had planned to support 5,000 households through cash transfers, seed distributions, and other interventions. However, due to limited funding, LRCS was only able to target 3,267 in Five districts (Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek) based on the current funding. This included 2,500 households that received cash assistance for an initial period of three months. The intervention was subsequently expanded to include an additional 800 households, who received cash assistance for two months.

LRCS engaged three Financial Service Providers (FSPs) (Vodacom, Econet and Chaperone) during the Emergency Assistance (EA) program to facilitate the transfer of cash to 2,500 households across five targeted districts. Each household received cash at the value of 1,500LSL For the first payment, each household received cash through one of the following FSP's platforms: Vodacom's Mpesa, Econet's Ecocash. Some delays in payments occurred due to updates in the Econet system. In response to these issues, LRCS also engaged assistance with Chaperone C-pay to ensure the continuation and completion of the payments.

The success rates for the cash payments were as follows:

- The first payment achieved a collection success rate of 94.8%, using Mpesa, Econet, and C-pay.

- The second payment saw a success rate of 94.7%. The third payment had a success rate of 96.7%.

Following the completion of the third tranche, volunteers were deployed to conduct follow-up visits with the remaining beneficiaries who had not yet received their cash assistance. As a result, 99.1% of the intended beneficiaries were reached. The remaining 0.9% could not be located, as they were reported to have migrated to other districts or to the Republic of South Africa, where they are staying with relatives or seeking employment opportunities.

Furthermore, as part of the programme scale-up, an additional 800 newly identified households were included in the cash assistance intervention. Each household received a monthly cash transfer of M1,500 over a two-month period. The transfers were delivered through mobile money platforms, namely Mpesa and Ecocash, to ensure a more efficient, secure, and accessible disbursement process. The first payment cycle achieved a success rate of 82.8%, while the second payment improved significantly, reaching 98.8%. However, forty-nine households had not received their outstanding cash transfers by the close of the operation in February.

In terms of monitoring, two Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) exercises were successfully conducted, one in November and another in February. Findings from the completed PDMs indicated that, in addition to meeting immediate needs such as food and essential household items, some 10% beneficiaries also used cash assistance to initiate small scale income-generating activities, including poultry farming, piggery, and other livelihood ventures. February. Only two instead of three PDM were conducted as the last cash transfers were made on 28 February, which was also the project's closing date and no additional expenses were permitted beyond the project's operational timeframe. Overall, the multi-purpose cash intervention reached **16,335 people (3,267 households)**.

Challenges/lessons learned

- Several operational and administrative challenges were experienced during the implementation of the cash assistance programme in Ketane, Qhoasing Council. One of the key challenges was delays in the transfer of funds from the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) account to the Financial Service Provider, which subsequently affected the timely disbursement of cash assistance to beneficiary households.
- In addition, although three Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) exercises were originally planned, only two were successfully conducted. No PDM was carried out for the final payment cycle made at the end of February, limiting the ability to fully assess the outcomes and effectiveness of that distribution round.
- Another significant challenge was the requirement for beneficiaries to register for mobile money platforms such as Ecocash, M-Pesa, or C-Pay using valid national identification documents. In many cases, targeted beneficiaries did not possess the required ID documents, which delayed their registration and consequently postponed payments.
- Furthermore, an upgrade of the Ecocash system took longer than anticipated, resulting in extended delays in payment processing. Although funds had already been transferred to the Financial Service Provider, the process of reversing or managing funds back to the LRCS account added further delays, slowing down the overall delivery of assistance.

These challenges highlight the need for improved financial flow planning, strengthened beneficiary documentation support, more flexible registration mechanisms, and better coordination with service providers to ensure timely and efficient cash-based interventions in future programmes.



Health & Care

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)

Female > 18:
1311

Female < 18: **5,680**

Male > 18: **473**

Male < 18: **5,411**

Objective:

Strengthening holistic individual and community health of the population impacted through community level interventions and health system strengthening

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of nutrition campaigns conducted (2 per district)

10

4

of people reached with health prevention activities

12,875

87,381

of groups engaged in the health discussion, training, or consultations (4 per district)

20

5

Achievements

- Four nutrition campaigns were conducted in Mafeteng (Thabana Morena), Qacha's Nek (Melikane, Tebellong), and Quthing (Dili-Dili) as part of efforts to strengthen community health and improve food and nutrition awareness. These campaigns delivered key messages on improved nutrition practices, household food security, and the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. The activities were implemented in close collaboration with government initiatives to ensure alignment with national health and nutrition priorities and to enhance outreach effectiveness.
- Additionally, six nutrition campaigns were conducted alongside the lead farmers and CBDRTs training. These sessions also provided an important platform to disseminate information on disease prevention, hygiene practices, and health promotion alongside disaster preparedness and agricultural training. Overall, these combined efforts significantly strengthened community awareness on nutrition and public health, while reinforcing integrated approaches to resilience building at household and community levels. A total of 12,875 were reached.
- First Aid trainings and awareness targeting communities and volunteers were conducted as part of CBDRTS trainings aimed at capacitating volunteers and communities on to prevent and manage health challenges within their communities.



First Aid Training and Demonstration during youth training in Mohale's Hoek.

Under the number of people reached with health prevention activities, 12,875 out of 87,381, due to lack of funding to support the EA.

Lesson learnt

- The intervention highlighted the critical need to strengthen first aid awareness within communities, including among farmers who are frequently exposed to tools and equipment that may cause injuries during daily agricultural activities.
- It was also observed that both Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) and Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) require more intensive and regular training in first aid. As first responders during

emergencies, their capacity to provide timely and effective assistance is vital for saving lives and improving community resilience. Strengthening their skills through continuous training and refresher courses would significantly improve local disaster preparedness and response capacity.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Female > 18:

987

Female < 18:

9,623

Male > 18: **679**

Male < 18: **6,211**

Objective:

Ensure safe drinking water, proper sanitation, and adequate hygiene awareness of the communities during relief and recovery phases of the Emergency Operation, through community and organizational interventions

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of WASH campaigns

6

5

Rehabilitated/ Constructed Water Sources

4

6

of people reached through WASH campaigns

17 500

87,381

Achievements

Overall, 17,500 people were reached through WASH campaigns which is lower than the target of 87,281 due to insufficient funding under the EA. In total 6 WASH campaigns were conducted, and these include Four WASH campaigns which were done alongside the nutrition campaigns which were conducted in Mafeteng (Thabana Morena), Qacha's Nek (Melikane, Tebellong), and Quthing (Dili-Dili) as part of efforts to strengthen community health and improve food and nutrition awareness. Additionally, two WASH campaigns were done in Mohale's Hoek (Ketane) and Maseru (Ha Abele) attracting participants from neighboring villages.

WASH campaigns were conducted alongside nutrition campaigns and integrated into lead farmer training sessions. These efforts emphasized safe food preparation and handling, the importance of protecting water sources, and practical demonstrations on home-based water purification methods. Beyond the training interventions, LRCS, under the EA implemented a range of community-based activities aimed at enhancing access to safe and sustainable water sources while strengthening overall household resilience.

These interventions were designed to address immediate drought-related challenges and support long-term water security within affected communities. The activities included the rehabilitation of two water sources in Qacha's Nek (Ha Tlali and Sepechele), alongside the completion of fencing works at two additional water points in Tebellong, Ha Ntlama, to safeguard them from contamination, vandalism, and animal interference. The rehabilitation process involved the construction of water reservoirs (storage tanks) to improve water storage capacity, the protection and stabilization of water catchment areas to ensure sustainability, and the replacement of damaged or deteriorated water pipelines in selected locations.

- **Ha Ntlama:** The existing water pump was serviced and properly maintained to restore its full operational capacity. This intervention was necessary because surrounding village communities had been experiencing prolonged difficulties in accessing clean water following the breakdown of the pump, which had remained non-functional for a very long period. Restoring the pump's functionality helped to improve water availability,

ease the burden on affected households, and support basic domestic and livelihood needs in the neighboring communities.

- **Tebellong:** Two new water tanks were constructed and securely fenced to improve access to safe and reliable water supply in the area. These facilities now serve approximately 180 households within the community. In addition, the water sources also support Tebellong Primary School, which has an enrolment of about 180 students, thereby improving water availability for school use, sanitation, and hygiene.
- **Ha Sepechele and Ha Tlali:** Water reservoirs (storage tanks) were constructed to ensure reliable storage and distribution of water, complemented by the installation of pipelines to facilitate efficient water transfer. The reservoir structures were also established at the water source as part of broader source protection measures, helping to safeguard water quality and improve long-term sustainability. In addition, a network of pipes was laid to convey water directly to the villages, improving accessibility for households. Collectively, the reservoirs serve approximately 150 households and 180 households respectively, thereby enhancing water security and reducing the burden of water collection in the community.

Challenges/lessons learned.

- Delayed approval for service providers/ contractors to commence work significantly affected the implementation timeline of the project. As a result, contractors were placed under considerable pressure to complete activities within a shortened time limit as the project neared its end. This rushed implementation risked overextending resources and potentially affecting the quality of work delivered.
- In addition, the delays in initiating activities subsequently impacted on the ability of the Department of Rural Water Supply to conduct timely inspections and issue completion certificates.



Rehabilitated and fenced Waters Sources in Ha Tlali and Tebellong, Qacha's Nek



Protection, Gender, and Inclusion

Female > 18:

2,107

Female < 18:

9,646

Male > 18: **1,515**

Male < 18: **6,211**

Objective:

Promote equitable access by all to quality basic services by considering basic needs based on gender and other diversity factors

Key indicators:

Indicator

Actual

Target

of community members reached through gender-based violence and child protection awareness campaigns, disaggregated by gender and age.

17,523

87,381

of households identified and registered beneficiaries representing vulnerable groups 5,000

3,300

5000

achievements

Community Engagement meetings were held to ensure transparency and address grievances about beneficiary identification, with a focus on including vulnerable groups such as the chronically ill, physically challenged, orphan-headed households, the elderly, and large households. Over 11,592 people received Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) messages during cash and farm input distributions, and this outreach will continue to expand. Through the support of trained LRCS volunteers and District Disaster Management Teams (activity led by Child and Gender Protection Unit and department of Social Protection), over 11,592 people received information on prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) and the promotion of child protection. They also raised community awareness of beneficiaries' rights, including the right to access assistance without discrimination, provide feedback, and use available complaints and feedback mechanisms. These messages were integrated into the opening remarks of all community engagements, including public gatherings, awareness campaigns, cash distribution events, and training sessions, ensuring that protection, gender, and inclusion considerations were consistently communicated throughout the implementation of the intervention. PGI initiatives were also integrated into verification, registration, and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) activities. Additionally, lead farmers were trained in the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), GBV and right to humanitarian aid without discrimination and were expected to help spread PGI messages within their communities.



Community Engagement and Accountability

Female > 18: **5,794**

Female < 18: **4,732**

Male > 18: **2,278**

Male < 18: **3,505**

Objective:			
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of people engaged and reached with CEA Activities	17,523	87,381
	# of established CEA approaches (toll free line, help desk and suggestion box)	1	1
	% of feedback successfully responded to	91%	100%
	# of group discussion conducted (5 per district)	13	60

Achievements

As part of the LRCS intervention, communities were also capacitated on their rights as beneficiaries, including the right to access humanitarian assistance without discrimination. Community members were informed about the available feedback and complaints mechanisms and encouraged to use these channels to provide feedback, raise concerns, or report any issues related to the implementation of the intervention. This was a success as communities in Mafeteng raised their concerns are not included in next distribution seeds and be supported with other livelihoods activities. Furthermore, complaints on cash transfers and delayed distribution of seeds were covered through CEA.

- During the targeting and registration phase, the Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approach was implemented to promote transparency and effectively address any concerns or grievances related to beneficiary selection. A range of feedback mechanisms were utilized to facilitate two-way communication and build trust with the community. These mechanisms included the deployment of trained volunteers, establishment of help desks, engagement of existing government structures, and placement of suggestion boxes at key locations. Mostly communities used volunteers and government structures (chiefs and community counselors).
- As part of the CEA activities, awareness campaigns, community meetings, and feedback sessions, over 17,523 individuals were reached. These efforts were integral to ensuring meaningful community participation and strengthening accountability throughout the LRCS drought response operation.
- CEA was disseminated to beneficiaries and communities using volunteers as a channel of reporting grievances and any issues related to drought operation but also through the District Secretaries, volunteers, local leaders, and government officers.
- 10 group discussions were conducted, and main areas of engagement were related to climate smart agriculture, food preservation, Psychosocial support (PSS), Red Cross movement, WASH, and nutrition.
- 91% of beneficiaries seeking feedback regarding LRCS activities were successfully treated or responded to.

Challenges/lessons learned.

- Most of the feedback was related to cash as beneficiaries expressed not receiving their cash or that it has delayed. Some of the feedback needed by the NS could not give a solution like 'someone lost their phone and ID. However, the team continued to provide feedback to the beneficiaries requesting information.

	Risk Reduction, climate adaptation, and Recovery	Female > 18: 28581	Female < 18: 5,794
		Male > 18: 2,790	Male < 18: 4,291
Objective:	<i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of participants trained in climate-smart agriculture techniques and food preservation methods, disaggregated by gender and age.</i>	2,622	7,000
	<i># of targeted communities receiving early warning messages based on the upcoming seasonal outlook.</i>	21, 456	20, 000
	<i>Community-Based Response Teams (CBRTs) revived and trained, disaggregated by geographic area (7 groups with twenty members each).</i>	8	8

Achievements

- 2,622 lead farmers were trained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in climate-smart agriculture and food preservation techniques. These training sessions were facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, aiming to promote sustainable and resilient farming practices. The trained farmers also disseminated knowledge within their communities, strengthening local capacity to adapt to climate change and maintain agricultural productivity under increasingly challenging environmental conditions.
- Additionally, through the LRCS volunteers and awareness-raising campaigns, a total of 21,456 individuals were reached with early warning messages (snow and cold waves alert) aimed at helping them prepare for the upcoming winter season. These messages provided vital information on how to mitigate risks associated with harsh weather conditions and protect their households and livelihoods. The dissemination of early warning messages was also supported by the national meteorological service, which shares the official six-month seasonal climate outlook to enhance community preparedness and resilience.
- A total of 31 Community Based Disaster Response Teams and Village disaster management teams were conducted, equipping 168 participants with the knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and prioritize risks within their communities. The training focused on equipping community members with practical

knowledge and skills to identify, assess, and respond to risks within their communities. Key thematic areas covered included hazard identification, vulnerability and capacity assessment, early warning dissemination, and basic first aid. Participants were also introduced to climate-smart approaches to disaster preparedness, recognizing the increasing impact of climate-related hazards such as droughts and cold waves in the region. These trainings aimed to strengthen local capacity in disaster risk reduction by involving community members in the development of localized preparedness and response strategies.



Community mapping in Ha Ramabanta-Maseru during CDBRT training and Volunteers First Aid Training Mohale's Hoek

Although the interventions reached most of its intervention, less was achieved in comparison to the plan as due insufficient funding to support the whole operation.

Challenges/lessons learned.

It was observed that both Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) and Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) require more frequent and intensive training in first aid to effectively perform their roles as first responders during emergencies. Continuous capacity building through regular refresher training is therefore crucial for enhancing local disaster preparedness and response capabilities. Investing in ongoing training will significantly improve community resilience and the overall effectiveness of emergency response at the local level.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective: <i>Strengthening the National Society's capacity to deliver humanitarian</i>			
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of technical volunteers recruited (Communications and DM) 2</i> <i>2 # of volunteers insured 80 80 X Lessons learnt Workshop 1 0</i>	2	2
	<i># of Branding and Visibility materials procured</i>	6 Gazebos; 6 pieces of Red Tablecloth	Banners (3) T-shirts (40) Cap (40)
	<i># of volunteers insured</i>	80	80
	<i>Lessons learnt Workshop</i>	5	1
	<i># of staff salaries covered</i>	10	10

Achievements

- The LRCS, through its branches, deployed **265** volunteers to assist with the drought response activities. Volunteers supported the registration, distribution of seeds, monitoring and conducting PDMs. In addition to these volunteers, two technical experts were brought on board to provide support for Disaster Management (DM) and Communications operations.
- To enhance visibility and promote LRCS and IFRC's profile, various visibility materials were procured. This included the purchase of six gazebos, each measuring 3x4.5 meters and accompanied by carry bags for easy transport. Additionally, six red tablecloths were acquired to further support the branding and visibility efforts during events and distributions.
- A total of 10 personnel including key staff such as the Disaster Management Manager, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) Officer, Accountant, five Project Officers (Divisional Secretaries), and two Disaster Management interns were supported through salary and contribution coverage from January to June 2025. This financial support ensured the continued implementation, coordination, and monitoring of project activities during the reporting period.
- Lessons learnt Workshop: During the IFRC monitoring visit in February 2026, the LRCS convened a lesson learnt meeting with the District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs) and National Society staff separately. The purpose of the meeting was to reflect on the implementation of the operation, identify key achievements and challenges, and document practical lessons to inform future programming. Instead of one lesson learned workshop that was initially planned, five separate lessons learnt workshops were done separately during the IFRC monitoring visit.
- The discussions provided an important platform for stakeholders to share field experiences, assess the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms, and highlight areas requiring improvement. This collaborative reflection also helped to strengthen partnerships between LRCS and district-level disaster management

structures, while ensuring that lessons generated from the response are systematically captured and used to enhance preparedness and future emergency interventions.

Overall key Lessons Learned

- A key finding from the implementation highlights the importance of joint monitoring involving all relevant stakeholders, particularly government counterparts. The inclusion of key line ministries in monitoring visits enhances coordination, strengthens accountability, and improves oversight of project interventions at both district and community levels.
- Timely procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs, particularly seeds, is critical to ensuring alignment with seasonal planting calendars. Delays in distribution can significantly reduce uptake and limit the intended impact on food production and household food security.
- Stronger engagement with the Ministry of Home Affairs is essential during beneficiary registration for mobile money platforms such as EcoCash and M-Pesa. It was observed that some beneficiaries lacked the required identification documents, which resulted in delays in registration and subsequent cash transfers.
- There is a need to engage multiple Financial Service Providers (FSPs) to reduce operational bottlenecks and avoid delays in cash disbursement. Diversifying FSP partnerships can improve efficiency, enhance coverage, and ensure timely delivery of assistance to beneficiaries.
- Within LRCS, the practice of inter-borrowing has emerged as a significant internal challenge that negatively impacts project implementation. Funds that are temporarily diverted from their originally approved purposes are often not reimbursed within the expected times. As a result, this creates cash flow constraints and disrupts the smooth execution of planned activities. The delays in returning these funds hinder the timely rollout of approved project initiatives, affecting overall efficiency, accountability, and the organization's ability to meet its strategic objectives.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	<i>Enhance coordination and partnerships among Movement and non-Movement partners to support stronger and more localized implementation approaches and effective response delivery</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of project launch and introductory meeting targeting key stakeholders conducted</i>	1	1
	<i>regular internal coordination meetings conducted involving partners (weekly, monthly)</i>	28	20
	<i># of external coordination meetings with DMA and other national actors (HCT, Inter-agency and cluster meetings)</i>	12	12
	<i># of market assessments conducted</i>	1	0

# of assessment reports submitted PDM	2	3
# of monitoring visits	28	15

Achievements:

To kick start the operation, a project launch meeting was held. The purpose was to introduce all the interventions under the EA, targeted districts and request full support from the government. Present in the meeting were the Minister in the Prime Minister's office, IFRC team (head of delegation and DM), LRCS president, District Disaster Management representatives from the targeted five districts.



Project launch and introductory meeting targeting key stakeholders conducted

As part of coordination and technical support, LRCS organized 18 internal coordination meetings across five districts, focusing on planning and monitoring the implementation of activities. Four stakeholders review meetings were held in each district, except Mohale's Hoek, to gather project feedback. Other meetings were held with communities to gather feedback of LRCS interventions.

- Routine weekly coordination and planning meetings have been held to evaluate progress, discuss future, and monitor the drought situation.
- The LRCS Disaster Manager and the IFRC Operations Manager actively participate in coordination meetings organized by the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and other humanitarian agencies, where they share updates and discuss operational plans.
- Both the LRCS Secretary General (SG) and Disaster Manager attend strategic and technical meetings of the Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCTs), ensuring strong participation in high-level coordination.
- A total of 28 monitoring field visits have been conducted, involving both LRCS governance (total of 5 visits with one per district), LRCS technical visits (10 visits with two in each district). Furthermore, as part of routine monitoring district-based government offices also conducted their technical and supervision visits (to provide on-the-ground technical support for drought operations. These monitoring visits will continue to track the progress of ongoing implementation.
- **Membership Coordination:** LRCS is working closely with IFRC in the drought response, leveraging resources and technical expertise in program operations and finance management. This support was further strengthened by deployment of two surge personnels: the Surge Operations Manager and Surge Finance personnel.
- **Engagement with External Partners:** LRCS, in coordination with IFRC, remains actively involved in drought coordination meetings led by DMA, covering key sectors such as Cash, Health, WASH, Food Security, and Livelihoods. These meetings provide an opportunity to share operational updates and progress.

- LRCS continues to engage with key government departments, including the DMA, Rural Water Supply (WASH), Ministry of Health (for healthcare promotion), Ministry of Agriculture (focused on food security and livelihoods), and the Department of Social Development. LRCS also coordinates with the Meteorological Department to stay updated on weather forecasts, ensuring that operations align with current and upcoming conditions.

Challenges/lessons learned.

- Effective emergency drought response demonstrated the importance of strong coordination and collaboration among stakeholders at both national and district levels. Working together in a structured and coordinated manner enhances the efficiency, reach, and impact of interventions, ensuring that resources are better aligned and duplication of efforts is minimized. Strengthening inter agency coordination is therefore essential for improving the effectiveness of future drought response initiatives.



**Secretariat
Services**

Objective: <i>Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster</i>			
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of regional surge deployed (Ops Manager and Finance)	2	2
	Risk registers are set up, mitigation measures identified and monitored once per month.	12	5
	IFRC Monitoring and supervision.	28	15
• The IFRC surge system deployed a Surge Operations Manager and Finance for technical support starting in October 2024 to provide technical support to LRCS team during the implementation of the EA • 28 field monitoring were undertaken to the fields to deliver training support, deliver farm inputs and monitor the quality of activities being implemented. In accordance with the IFRC Risk Management Framework, the operation was committed to identifying and analyzing risks associated with activities and operations monthly through a risk register.			

C. FUNDING

The Emergency Appeal secured CHF 1,335,250 in financial contributions, representing 26.7% coverage of the overall CHF 5 million funding target. Included in this amount was a CHF 750,000 loan provided through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), which proved instrumental in enabling the timely launch and early implementation of Emergency Appeal interventions. The availability of these funds allowed the operation to commence critical response activities without delay, ensuring that urgent humanitarian needs could be addressed during the initial phase of the emergency. Despite the funding gap, the LRCS demonstrated strong financial management and operational capacity by fully utilizing 100% of the allocated resources in support of the planned response activities.



Grouped Appeal: MDRL0008
Appeal ID: MDRL0008
Period: 15 May 2024 to 30 Jun 2026

Operational Strategy Financial Report

APPEAL MDRLS008 - Lesotho - Drought

All figures in Swiss Francs (CHF)

OPERATING TIMEFRAME
15 May 2024 to 28 Feb 2026

APPEAL LAUNCH DATE
16 May 2024

REPORT STATUS
FINAL

SECTION I Emergency Appeal Funding Requirements

TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS
5,000,000
CHF

DONOR RESPONSE* (as per 28 Jul 2026)
1,296,453
CHF

APPEAL COVERAGE
26%
of total funding requirement

SECTION II IFRC Operating Budget Implementation

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & ENABLING APPROACHES	OP STRATEGY	OP BUDGET	EXPENDITURE	VARIANCE
AP000 - Undefined output	0	0	0	0
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	0	0	0	0
PO02 - Livelihoods	0	164,165	178,591	-14,426
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	0	664,456	609,886	54,570
PO04 - Health	0	13,358	13,447	-89
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0	35,270	37,687	-2,417
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0	0	0	0
PO07 - Education	0	0	0	0
PO08 - Migration	0	0	0	0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	5,000,000	26,846	53,924	-27,079
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	0	6,521	-9,372	15,893
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability	0	0	0	0
Planned Operations Total	5,000,000	910,616	884,163	26,453
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships	0	0	0	0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	0	216,140	216,499	-359
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	0	208,494	234,127	-25,633
Enabling Approaches Total	0	424,634	450,626	-25,992
TOTAL	5,000,000	1,335,250	1,334,790	460

SECTION III Operating Movement & Closing Balance

Opening Balance	0
Income (Includes outstanding DREF Loan per IV.)	1,335,250
Expenditure	-1,334,790
Closing Balance	460
Deferred Income	0
Funds Available	460

SECTION IV DREF Loan

* not Included in Donor Response	Loan:	38,797	Reimbursed:	0	Outstanding:	38,797
----------------------------------	-------	--------	-------------	---	--------------	--------



Grouped Appeal: MDRL0008
Appeal ID: MDRL0008
Period: 15 May 2024 to 30 Jun 2026

Operational Strategy Financial Report

SECTION V Contributions by Donor and Other Income

Opening Balance	0					
INCOME TYPE	Cash	InKind Goods	InKind Personnel	Other Income	TOTAL	Deferred Income
DREF Allocations	0	0	0	750,000	750,000	0
European Commission - DG ECHO	197,813	0	0	0	197,813	0
Japanese Red Cross Society	28,432	0	0	0	28,432	0
Red Cross of Monaco	9,370	0	0	0	9,370	0
The Netherlands Red Cross	349,635	0	0	0	349,635	0
Total Contributions and Other Income	585,250	0	0	750,000	1,335,250	0
TOTAL INCOME AND DEFERRED INCOME	1,335,250					0

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

In the Lesotho National Society

- **Secretary General** (or equivalent); Sechaba Mokhameleli, smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls, +26658861206
- **Operational coordination:** Sebongile Hlubi, Operations and Disaster Management Manager, shlubi@redcross.org.ls, +26658014081.

In the IFRC

- **IFRC Regional Office for Africa DM coordinator:** Kwan Ho Lam, Acting Manager, Disasters, Climate and Crises, Africa, kwanho.lam@ifrc.org +852 6425 6168
- **IFRC Country Cluster Support Team:** Name, title, email, phone

For IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledges support:

- **IFRC Regional Office for Africa** Franciscah Cherotich Kilel, Acting Head, Grants Management and Donor relations, franciscah.kilel@ifrc.org

For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support:

- **Global Logistics Services** – Nikola Jovanovic, Acting Regional Head, Global Humanitarian Services, Africa; nikola.jovanovic@ifrc.org +41 78305 5327

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)
- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate, and always promote all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.